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A
S E R M O N
Preach'd before the HONOURABLE the
House of COMMONS,
A T
St. MARGARET's Church, *Westminster*,
O N
Saturday M A Y 29. 1742.

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A
SERMON

Preach'd before the Honourable the

House of Commons

AT

St. MARGARET'S Church, Westminster,



1742.

Sunday

BEING THE

ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

RESTORATION

OF

KING CHARLES II.

By the Reverend

WILLIAM WEBSTER, D.D.

Vicar of Ware and Rector of St. Andrew's, Ware.

LONDON:

Printed for JAMES CROOKAT, at the Black-Swan,

in Strand.

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By the REVEREND *K*
WILLIAM WEBSTER, D. D.
Vicar of *Ware* and *Thundridge* in *Hertfordshire*.

L O N D O N:

Printed for JAMES CROKATT, at the *Black Horse* near
Fleet-bridge, in *Fleet-street*.



Lunæ 31 Die Maii 1742.

ORDERED,

THAT the Thanks of this House be given to the Reverend Doctor Webster, for the Sermon by him preached before this House on Saturday last at St. Margaret's, Westminster; and that he be desired to print the same; and that Mr. Carew, Mr. Gray, and Mr. Sydenham, do acquaint him therewith.

N. HARDINGE,

Cl' Dom' Com'

To the HONOURABLE the
House of COMMONS.

GENTLEMEN,

I Had the Honour of your Commands to preach the following Sermon before you ; and as you had not, *All*, the Opportunity of *hearing* it, I take the Liberty to request your attentive Perusal of it; not for the sake of any Excellency in the Composition (for it is a very imperfect one, drawn up in a short Time, and under an Indisposition of Body), but out of regard to the great Importance of the Subject Matter of it. There are Hints suggested to your Consideration, which, I hope, you will not slight, but by your Wisdom improve to those good Purposes which I most sincerely intended in
giving .

DEDICATION.

giving them. No Man living has more Veneration, than I have, for *Authority*; no Man more Honour for the *Dignity* of a *British Senate*, who are the *Representatives* of the *People*, and the *Guardians* of their *Liberties*; in all respects, worthy of our highest Esteem. But, as you owe your Seats in *Parliament* to our *Freedom*, and act there in our *stead*, and on our *behalf*, it is our *natural Right* to impart our *Sentiments* *freely* to you. But, on this *Occasion*, I have a *double Right*, and am under a *double Obligation*, to do it; as an *Englishman*, and a *Minister* of *God's Word*. As an *Englishman*, who has his All depending upon your *Resolves*, I may, without Offence, speak my *Opinion* concerning our present *Condition* in our *Civil Affairs*: As a *Preacher*, I *must* *speak boldly*, as I *ought to speak*, in respect to *Religion*. It can never be a proper *Time* for *propheſying Deceit*, and *this* is no *Time* for *smooth Doctrine*. We
are,

DEDICATION.

are, I am fully persuaded, in the most imminent Danger of Destruction ; and our Danger is the greater, because we do not seem to be duly sensible of it, or not duly affected by it. Without a Change as to our *religious* Behaviour, God will most assuredly lay his avenging Hand on us ; and without a Change of *Morals*, and some of our *Measures*, we shall as certainly be destroyed by the Force of *natural* Causes. Why I am of this Opinion, any one may see that will read my Sermon. But in respect to some of our *Measures*, I have explained my Sentiments more at large, and in a more proper Place, in the *Consequences of Trade*, &c. which Scheme, I purpose, by God's Blessing, still farther to enlarge. I never had above one single Point of View in my publick Conduct ; and that was, to do as much Good as I could possibly, without any regard to my Interest in *this* Life ; and I am thoroughly
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DEDICATION.

convinced, that if I can be the happy Means of giving *Gentlemen* a right Notion of those Matters, I shall do greatly more Good than it is possible for me to do in any other Way; be a *Benefactor*, not only to *this* Nation, but to the *Liberties of Europe*, and the whole *Protestant Cause*. I am,

GENTLEMEN,

With the most sincere

and profound Respect,

Your much Honoured,

and most Obedient,

humble Servant,

W. Webster.

P S A L M cxviii. 23, 24.

*This is the LORD's doing and it is marvellous,
in our Eyes.*

*This is the Day which the LORD hath made:
we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

THESE Words are so very applicable to our present Meeting, that they are not only made Part of the Service for the Day, but are cited in the *Act of Parliament* which calls us together on this Occasion. — They are Part of a congratulatory Hymn on account of *David's* full and undisturbed Possession of the Throne of *Israel* and *Judah*.

And whether we consider the Circumstances of the King of *Israel* and the King of *England*, the *Manner* of their Establishment upon their Thrones, or the *Consequences* of it, there is, in all these Respects, a very great, and, I wish I could truly add, a *perfect* Similitude between them. — As to the *Condition* of the Two Monarchs, they were, both, hunted, like Partridges, upon the Mountains; they were, both, driven for Shelter into the Woods, and most obscure Corners of the Earth; they were, both, marvellously protected by the Divine Providence; they were, both, forced to take Refuge in foreign Countries, even among the Enemies of the *true Israel of God*; and, both, returned to their own Land, and to the Enjoyment of their Dominions; and how much more glorious would it be to the

Memory of *our* restored Monarch, if the Parallel could be extended to the *Piety* and *Virtue* of the other Royal Fugitive, if he had returned to his Country with the same *religious* Gratitude to God's Goodness in protecting and restoring him, and with the same affectionate Zeal for the Honour of his Laws, and the Furity of his Worship! How much more happy for his Country, if his whole Reign had been as successful and prosperous as that of *David*! But let his Blemishes be treated with Tenderness for the Sake of his *Father's* truly *Christian* and truly *Royal* Virtues and Sufferings, who was both the most shining Ornament and the foulest Disgrace to this Nation. As our History will inform latest Posterity, that at such a Time there sat upon the Throne of *England*, a Prince who perfectly understood the Grounds and Principles of his Religion; who had Sense and Divinity enough to have discharg'd, nay, and adorn'd, the first Post in the *Church*; who was as zealous, as he was an able Advocate for it; who lived a bright Example of its Precepts, of the Humility and Charity and other Virtues, of a *private Christian*, as well as of the most resplendent and exalted Virtues of a *Sovereign*; who, at last, died a *Martyr*, with as much Resignation and Courage as any *Christian*, or *Hero*, ever shewed, either in the *Field*, or on a *Scaffold*; When they shall consider all the Perfections of this admirable Prince, they may apply to the Nation what the Queen of *Sheba* said of the People of *Israel*, on account of King *Solomon*; "Happy were thy Men; happy
 " were those thy Servants that stood continually
 " before thee, and that heard thy Wisdom: Blessed
 " be the LORD thy God which delighted in thee
 " to set thee on the Throne of these Kingdoms;
 " because the LORD *loved* them, therefore he made
 " thee King to do Justice and Judgment." — But where shall we find a Parallel to match the Folly and Wicked-

Wickedness of those infatuated Rebels, who, as insensible of their own Felicity, as they seem'd to be of his Virtues, shamefully and cruelly condemned him as the worst of Criminals, and, with one of the best of Kings, destroyed the most excellent Constitution in the World. — Yet, in the midst of Judgment, GOD has remember'd Mercy; and after the Nation had long groan'd under the most oppressive Miseries, restored to the right Heir his Crown, and to the Nation its happy Establishment. For this wonderful Act of GOD's gracious Favour, we have been returning our joint Praises and Thanksgivings; and in order to preserve and improve our grateful Sense of our great Obligations to Providence, and to remind ourselves of the right Use that we ought to make of this blessed Event, I shall,

I. Take notice of GOD's Government of *States and Kingdoms*, and of the legible Characters of a *divine*, Interposition in the *Restoration of our King and Government*. — “This is the LORD's doing;” “this is the Day which the Lord hath made:” And it ought to appear marvellous in our Eyes, that we may see

II. What great Reason we have to be glad and rejoice in it.

I. The first Reflection that naturally suggests its self to us on this Occasion, respects GOD's Government of *States and Kingdoms*, and the legible Characters of a *Divine* Interposition, which appear in the *Restoration of our King and Government*. Without a due Sense of these Things, we cannot, in a proper manner, keep this joyful Festivity. Unless we look up to the Omnipotent, though invisible Hand, which conducted and aided the external Instruments of the *Restoration*, let our Apprehension of the Blessing be ever so clear and strong, GOD will lose the Glory of his Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness,

and *we* shall be wanting in our pious Acknowledgments, and lose all the religious Uses of a firm Belief, that there is an over-ruling Power which *can* and *will* protect us, if we seek and take care to merit his Protection, and that all the Force of human Wisdom and Power can never secure a wicked People from the Divine Vengeance. To deny this Doctrine, is to reproach the *Liturgy*, the *Laws*, and the *Legislature*, with the weakest Folly, or the most infamous Hypocrisy. The Service appointed for the 30th of *January*, prays thus, “ We thy sinful
 “ Creatures, here assembled before thee, do, in
 “ the Behalf of all the People of this Land, hum-
 “ bly confess, that they were the crying *Sins* of the
 “ Nation which brought down this heavy *Judgment*
 “ upon us. But, O gracious God, when thou
 “ makest Inquisition for Blood, lay not the Guilt of
 “ this innocent Blood to the Charge of the People
 “ of this Land, nor let it ever be required of us, or
 “ our Posterity.” And the Service for this Day, as well as the Act, appointing the Use of it, in the strongest Terms, ascribes the *Restoration* to the over-ruling Hand of *God*, and expressly acknowledges, that “ God has, in all Ages, shewed forth his
 “ Power and Mercy in the miraculous Deliverances
 “ of his Church, and in the Protection of righteous
 “ and religious Kings and States, professing his
 “ holy and eternal Truth.” — And this is no more than what has been, and is still, the universal Opinion of all Ages and Nations, professing the Belief of a Deity; and the *Romans*, in particular, ascribed the great Success of their Arms to the particular Blessing of *Heaven* upon their *Piety* and *Virtue*; and in Times of Danger and Distress from ill Success, all Nations constantly imputed it to the Anger of the *Deity*, whom they endeavoured to appease by the richest Sacrifices. The Doctrine, therefore, of such an over-ruling Providence, especially in respect
 to

to KINGS and KINGDOMS, is not, as some would insinuate, a *superstitious* Notion, or a Notion peculiar to *Christianity*, but an Opinion universally entertained, grounded upon the Belief of a God, and *inseparable* from it; for, as to any Purposes of *Religion* and *Society*, the Belief of a Being, who, like *Epicurus's* Gods, is only an *unconcerned Spectator* of his Creatures, is of no Signification at all; so that all such Notions are no better than *Infidel* ones, and their Patrons declared confess'd Enemies of their Country. --- If we look into the *Bible*, God's *Declarations* are too express to be contradicted, and too awful to be unaffecting. He not only declares his *Sovereignty* over the whole World, but the *actual Exercise* of it; that the *Rise* and *Downfal* of Kingdoms, are the Effect of his Power; that *he* mustereth the Armies; that *he* sends them and gives them Success.

The *Instances* of his *national Judgements* and *Mercies* are but one continued Series of Conduct from the Beginning of Nations. A *wicked* People never failed of being *corrected*; and, if their *Chastisement* did not bring them to *Repentance*, when the Measure of their Iniquity was filled up, they were *utterly destroyed*; but a *religious* and *pious* Nation was as constantly the Object of God's *Favour* and *Protection*. No Nation ever suffered a *publick Visitation*, whose Sins did not deserve it; nor was ever any Nation, eminent for *Religion*, unrewarded with *publick Blessings* from God. Thus it ever *has* been, and thus it ever *will* be, because this Method of Procedure is founded upon the *Immutability* of God's Justice, Purity, and Holiness. *Vice* will always be equally odious to the Deity, and *Virtue* always equally acceptable to him; there will always be the *same Reason* why God should vindicate the *Authority* of his *Government*, and assert the *Honour* of his *Laws*, by taking *publick Notice* of *national Wickedness*

Wickedness and *national Virtue*. He himself has told us, that this is the Course of his Conduct, and given us the Reason of it; and as that Reason must always, hold equally, we may be assured, that his Conduct will be always uniformly the same. He declares his *Judgments* to be sent for the *Punishment* of those Nations who did not acknowledge his Government of the World, who did not seek to him, and trust in him, for his Assistance, but relied solely on their own Wisdom and Force, or who rendered themselves obnoxious to his Displeasure by their Wickedness, frequently giving a black Catalogue of those Vices for which he punished them; and, consequently, every Nation, under the like Circumstances of *Iniquity*, may be assured of the same Treatment. Whenever they were *penitent*, they never failed of God's *Mercy*; and we may with equal *Certainty* upon the same Principles conclude, that his *Blessing* shall never be wanting to a *religious* People. As he has always acted after this manner, he will always continue to do so from the same Motives, his Nature and the Nature of *Wickedness* and *Virtue* being immutable (a).

The Manner of God's interposing with *national Punishments*, and *national Blessings*, is not now so extraordinary and miraculous, as it was formerly under the *Jewish* Dispensation, neither is there the same Occasion for it. The *Jews* were separated from the

(a) Whoever compares God's Declarations and the History of his Government with the present corrupt State of *Europe* and the Antichristian Conduct of Princes, must be convinced, that we have Reason to expect the severest Chastisements, if not the total Ruin of most of the Governments, which, as usual, he will execute, by making them the Instruments of each other's Ruin. This is not the less, but the more likely to be true, because Men will not believe it, such obdurate Blindness being a sure Prognostick of these Distresses; and if we take a particular View of our own Condition in these Nations, the Prospect is very melancholy.

rest of the World in order to preserve the Knowledge and Worship of the *true God*; and therefore these *miraculous* Interpositions, in Favour or Disfavour of *them*, either to subdue their Enemies, or to deliver them into their Hands, according as they kept to their Religion, or lapsed into *Idolatry*, this was a natural and effectual Means of awakening the Attention of the idolatrous Nations about them, and convincing them, that the God of *Israel* was the only true God, the universal Lord of the whole Earth. But as Mankind, at present, stand in no Need of any such *extraordinary* Means of Conviction, they are no longer afforded them, but Men are left to believe upon the Evidence of a *standing Revelation*, sufficiently confirmed; and, having so much Reason from *sacred* and *profane* History, and from the *Attributes of God*, to be satisfied that his *true Religion and Worship* shall always be the Object of God's peculiar Care and Protection; and that the Denial of his *Authority*, and the Violation of his *Laws*, will always feel the Severity of his *Judgments*; we have reasonable Motives for *Piety*, for an awful Dread of his *Indignation*, and an humble *Trust* in his *Goodness*, tho' he does not rain down Fire from Heaven to consume us; tho' he does not divide the Sea, open the Rocks, send down Manna, or by an Angel strike 200,000 Men dead for our Deliverance. And we are not, we especially of *this Nation*, are not without *Instances* of Deliverances, almost *miraculous*; so *very extraordinary*, that the Events cannot *reasonably* be accounted for in a *merely* human Way, and where there are obvious Reasons, drawn from undeniable Principles, to suppose a *Divine Interposition*.

If we go back to the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, it will afford us plain Marks of the *Divine Assistance* and Protection. — Tho' the *Reformation* was begun in *Henry the Eighth's* Time, it was interrupted

rupted in Queen *Mary's*, but happily, tho' with great Difficulty, established by Queen *Elizabeth*. If we consider the then defenceless State of the Nation, the Number of Enemies among *ourselves*, and an almost universal Combination of *Foreign* Powers against us, our Ruin seemed, in an *human* View, so probable, that when *Spain* fitted out their INVINCIBLE *Armada*, they sent it with as much Confidence of Success, as if their Errand had not been to conquer, but to take *Possession*. For the compassing great Events, God always makes Choice of the fittest Means, and by insensible Ways assists them in the Execution. Our then glorious Princess was raised up by *Providence*, and fitted, like *Cyrus* and *Alexander*, for carrying on the grandest Designs of God, respecting the *true Religion*, under seemingly insuperable Disadvantages, which her great Abilities, aided by the Power, and directed by the Wisdom of the ALMIGHTY, at last surmounted. Her Wisdom taught her, that there was a Wisdom and Power superior to any thing that is *human*, and to *Him* she gave the Honour of the Success. When her Enemies thought to mortify her by imputing their Defeat to *Providence*, she reckoned it *her* greatest Glory, that she was under the *Divine Protection*, she triumphed in That Glory, and struck a *Medal* to make a publick Acknowledgment of it.

In the next Reign, the Discovery of the *Gunpowder Plot* may be imputed, as it was then, to God, "*Inspiring* the King with a *Divine* Spirit to interpret some dark Phrases in the Letters, above and beyond all ordinary Construction." This was the Language of those Times; this was the Legislature's Opinion, and this is still the Opinion of all sober and serious Persons. — And how easy is it for Him who made all the Faculties of our Minds, imperceptibly to enlighten them? And how reasonable a Supposition is it to imagine, that the great Governor of the World *should* interpose in Events of

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of such Importance to his own Honour, the Interest of his *true Religion*, and the Good of three Kingdoms? I might have added, of a great many more, whose Fate depended upon that of *England*. Instead of disputing with our MAKER the Glory of these Blessings; let us, who share in the happy Fruits of them, celebrate the Praises of our Benefactor, and endeavour, by our Thankfulness and Obedience, to render ourselves worthy of their Continuance.

The *Restoration* was in many Parts of it very wonderful; but I would direct your Observation particularly to the King's *Escape* and *Preservation* after the Battle of *Worcester*, and to the state of the Nation at the very Time when the King was called home. In reading over the Narrative of his Escape, it is difficult to say, whether you feel most Pain from the many Dangers which appear unavoidable, or Pleasure to find the Hand of God leading the King safe thro' them. At the Conclusion the Historian (*Ecchard*, p. 696.) expresses himself thus: "Such were the Particulars of the King's
" wonderful Escape from such Variety of Dangers
" and Difficulties as cannot be paralleled in History;
" so that he seemed to be all the Way guided and
" guarded by Angels from Heaven. It must
" be amazing to all Posterity, that among so many
" Persons of mean Condition, of so contrary Religions, among so many Women, and other timorous People, who were frightened at the very
" Name of *Death*, that among so many broken
" and indigent Persons, to whom a great Reward
" was so tempting, not a single Person offered to
" betray him." Let *Infidels*, if they can, account for this in a natural Way, agreeable to the Experience which we have of the usual Behaviour of Mankind under the like Circumstances.

And it is almost as wonderful, that he was not *assassinated*, or *poisoned* abroad; or, indeed, that he

was not *demand*ed by the triumphant and dreaded *Usurper*, and delivered up by some of the Foreign States. The *Usurper* was bold enough to dare to do any thing, and they shewed themselves mean enough to submit to any thing. As to the *Dutch*, it is no Wonder that a *Republick* should dislike and slight a *King*. It is true, they were under very great Obligations to this Nation. Queen *Elizabeth* supported them in their *Infancy* against the Tyranny of their *Spanish Masters*, and they have since received many Advantages from us ; and, in *Gratitude*, the *Crown* of *England* might demand their utmost Assistance against its rebellious and tyrannical *Subjects*. But *Gratitude*, like other Virtues, is very seldom the Growth of a *political* Soil : *Self-Interest*, with a numerous Retinue of Succours, is the *natural* Product of it, and usually cultivated with much *Art*. For some time they did not think it their *Interest* to countenance the banished, persecuted Prince ; and therefore they were willing that he should seek for better Friends in some other Part of the World ; till they saw that his *Restoration* was unavoidable, and, then, upon the same Motives that induced them before to be so very unneighbourly, they sent great Compliments to him at *Breda*, and afterwards paid him great Honours at the *Hague*, expressing their Joy in very high Terms.

The *French King* was not only a *Neighbour* under the Ties of *Charity*, but a *Brother King*, and a *near Relation* ; to whose *Friendship* our distressed *Monarch* was as justly intitled by the Claims of *Affinity*, as he was to his *Assistance* by the Laws of *Nature*. But with *Statesmen*, *NATURE* and *AFFINITY* have often as little Force, as *Obligations*. Notwithstanding all these Considerations, they were true to their standing Maxim of *Interest*. They received the *Usurper's* Embassador with the greatest Solemnity, and engaged, by *Treaty*, to exclude out of their Domini-
ons

ons our King, with his Brothers, and all his Relations and Adherents, except the *Queen Mother* herself, who was both a *Native* and a *Daughter* of *France*. But, no Wonder that, for Reasons of *State*, they should banish him the *French Dominions*, when by fomenting our unnatural Disturbances, they had contributed towards his Banishment from his *own Kingdoms*. *This*, you will think, was going great Lengths, but they were so intent upon their *political Views*, as to forget all Kinds of *common Decency*; for, with an Eye to the advantageous *Treaty* (in which Way they have always been more successful than by their *Arms*) their *Embassador* in *England* not only paid most fulsome *Adulation* to a most *tyrannical Usurper*, but called his *Usurpation*, a *just Government* (a). Thus forsaken of his *Neighbours*, of his *Friends*, of his *Relations*, the unfortunate Fugitive wandered up and down the World, with a Price set upon his Head, among *Strangers*, among *Enemies*, from whom the best Treatment that he could well expect, was, to receive *no Injury*. And, yet, for several Years, the *Divine Providence* supported this forlorn Prince, and guarded him from all Dangers, till he placed him in Safety, in Prosperity, in Glory, upon the Throne of his Father, and blessed the Nation with their antient *Government* and *Religion*. So truly may we apply the Words of my Text, *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our Eyes*, &c.

But we shall not have a full Sense of the Share which *Providence* had in this marvellous Work, without attending to the *Time* and *Manner* of its Accomplishment. God brought the greatest Order out of the greatest Confusion, ALMOST *instantaneously*; as when he said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*. Indeed, the Nation had suffered enough to

(a) *Ech. 709.*

make them desirous of a Change, and, as it appeared, the Nation in general *did* desire it. I am unwilling to give so painful a Description, as that of the Miseries which they had endured, tho' it might help to increase our Gratitude and our Joy; but I beg your Attention to a few Particulars, which shew the Hand of God in punishing Men in Kind. *Abab's* Blood, you must remember, was spilt in the very Place where Dogs licked the Blood of *Nahoth*, whom he had murdered. *Haman* was hanged on the same Gallows which he had unjustly prepared for *Mordecai*. *David's* Murder and Adultery were punished by his Son *Abalom's* lewd Incest. Variety of such Instances there are, not only in the Bible, but in other Histories; and a worthy Person (who, I hope, will *publish* it) has made such a large Collection of flagrant Facts as would *surprise* any one that has not thought of the Subject, and silence the most hardened Disbeliever of a particular Providence. Thus, in the present Case, one of the Crimes for which King *Charles* the First lost his Crown and his Head, was, his raising of Money without the Authority of *Parliament*, though the Practice of his Predecessors in the like Instances and the Opinion of the Twelve Judges naturally induced him to think it *legal*; and *Cromwell*, without any Authority at all, levied what Taxes he pleased in the most arbitrary Manner. Another *high Crime* was, a Breach of *Privilege*, in coming abruptly to the *House of Commons* and demanding some of the Members; and *Cromwell* came into the House with an *armed Force*, called the Members a *Pack of Fools and Knaves*, ordered the *Speaker* to quit the Chair, and bid them all go about their Business. They charged the *King* with *Superstition*, and God, in his *Vengeance*, gave them up to as wild *Enthusiasm*, as ever infected and infatuated a Set of Men. They went further in their Accusation, and imputed

imputed to him, as well as to Archbishop *Laud*, *Popish* Principles and Designs; and, as a just Judgment upon the Nation for the unjust Murder of those faithful Friends to the *Protestant* Religion, by the Banishment of the *Royal Family* into *Popish* Countries we came to be in *real* and *imminent* Danger of having *POPERY* established among us. When the *King* made Overtures of Peace, (and he often made such as were a greater Argument of his *Goodness* than of his *Prudence*) they pretended, that they would not *trust* him, tho' he was a Person of the *strictest Veracity*; and they were afterwards so possessed as to believe *CROMWELL's* hypocritical Pretences, whose great Talent and Engine of Government was, the *deepest Dissimulation*. In short, the grievous Oppressions of the Nation were in general apposite to the Crimes which the Sufferers had committed against the *King*; as almost the whole Body of *Independents*, *Anabaptists*, *Quakers*, and other *Sectaries*, whom he had set up, and who had set up him, confess, in a mournful Address to *King Charles* the Second at *Brussels*, inviting him to come home and deliver them out of the Hands of the Oppressor.

But, though the *Body* of the People had reason to be, and were very well disposed towards a *Restoration*, yet those in *Power* and *Authority* were as much averse to it. *Human* Wisdom could not foresee how they could be reconciled to it, or how it could be effected without their Consent. Nothing but that *infinite* Wisdom, which form'd a beautiful World out of a rude Chaos, could bring the sweetest Harmony out of the most jarring Interests. General *Monk*, the grand *human* Instrument by which God wrought our Deliverance, was, like all other Instruments of *Providence* in the Accomplishment of such important Events, as well fitted, as *Man* could be, for the glorious Part which he had to act for God, his *King*, and his *Country*;
but

but, particularly, in respect to his *Prudence* in concealing his Designs, and judging rightly of his Opportunities. He had all the impenetrable *Secrecy* of *Cromwell* himself, without his *Hypocrisy*; and, in Justice and Gratitude to his Memory I speak it, no Man ever acted *such* a Part, under *such* Men, with so much Honour and Honesty. But, though I am fully convinced, myself, and have convinced many others (*b*), that he always *intended* to *restore* the KING, whenever an Opportunity should serve, yet I agree with the *noble* Historian, “ That no Man living, of *himself*, could have Wisdom enough to foresee, “ or Understanding enough to contrive it.” ---- And, therefore, not unto his *Instruments*, but unto the great Disposer of all Events, let us, with the profoundest Reverence, and the warmest Gratitude, ascribe the Glory of it.

And, while we are enumerating the extraordinary Blessings with which God has distinguished these Nations, I should think it inexcusable if I omitted to mention the *Revolution*; as that is another equally memorable Instance of the Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of God: And, as it requires our Tribute of unfeigned Thanks and Praise, so, I hope, I am *willing* to hope, that our *latest* Posterity will see the gracious Ends of Providence answer'd by the Preservation of that admirable Constitution in *Church* and *State* which has been so wonderfully secured to us. If it be possible for a People to learn Wisdom from *Experience*, we of this Nation may see that a *Commonwealth* and a *Popish Prince* are utterly inconsistent with our Safety and Prosperity; as the *Restoration* and the *Revolution* may be a Caution to future *Princes* and *Subjects* how they make Attempts upon the Liberties of *England*.

(*b*) See Preface to *Skinner's* Life of the General.

I have taken up thus much of your Time to very little Purpose, if you are not now in a Disposition to *rejoice and be glad*. Your Thoughts have been carried back to recollect the Calamities, which, in all human Probability, we should have been bewailing, if GOD had not, as on this Day, restor'd, and afterwards as marvellously preserved, to us, our antient *Government and Religion*; and, surely, these Reflections, are matter of the most solid Comfort and Satisfaction. We should be very *unworthy* of such great Blessings, if we were either insensible of them, or unaffected by them. ----- *Happy are the People that are in such a Case*; but the greatest Ingredient in our Happiness is this, that we have all along, in so distinguishing a manner, *had the LORD for our GOD*. Instead of lying at the Mercy of a wild *Enthusiast*, or a *Popish* Bigot, to live under the mild and safe Temperature of a *limited Monarchy*, of a Monarchy limited in the *wisest manner*; to have *Rights and Properties* preserved to us by Laws of our *own making*, instead of being governed by the arbitrary Will of *fallible Man*, liable to be intoxicated and made frantick by the Possession of absolute Power, executed by the Agency of a *military Force*; to have the *Prerogative* of the *Crown* and the *Liberty* of the *Subject* secured by such an even, steady Balance, that neither Scale can preponderate, without a great deal of Folly and Wickedness in that of the *People*, and as much Mismanagement in that of the *Prince*; but, above all, to exchange the *Fumes* of *Fanaticism* and the *Superstition* and *Idolatries* of *Popery* for the pure and primitive Doctrines of *Christianity* and a reasonable Worship happily composed of *Decency* and *Simplicity*; these are singular Advantages, in themselves so very valuable, that we ought to be tenderly affected with Joy and Gratitude. But, when we consider these Advantages as secured and conveyed down to us by the visible Hand of GOD, our Joy must needs be
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the greater, as we have Reason to hope for the same Almighty Protection for their future Preservation. Unless we foolishly throw them away by our ill Conduct, or by our Wickedness provoke God to deprive us of them; may we not piously believe, that we shall continue to be the Objects of his peculiar Care? as we shall be the Marks of his singular Vengeance, if we wantonly abuse the Riches of his Mercy and Lovingkindness. We have hitherto, like the *Jews* of old, been the favourite People of God, because, like *them*, God has made us his Instruments in the Preservation of the *true Religion*; and, while we continue to qualify ourselves to answer those gracious Designs of preserving and propagating the *Christian Religion* in its original Purity, the Gates of Hell shall never be able to prevail against us. This *Church* and *Nation* have long been its great Bulwark against its most dangerous Enemy, the *Church of Rome*. The Seed of the *Gospel* has here been watered with the Blood of *Martyrs* and *Confessors*; with *noble*, with *royal Blood*. The Truth of our Religion, and of its essential Doctrines have been as ably defended by sound Learning; as they have been piously adorned by a good Life. But, as God did not make Choice of the *Israelites* to be his peculiar People out of any *local (c)* Fondness for

(c) Besides that *Christianity* has long been professed in greater Purity, and more ably defended in this, than in any other Nation; besides that we have been the great Support of the *Protestant Religion Abroad*; we have, moreover, some good Grounds, from the Nature and Situation of our Country, to consider ourselves as the *fittest, natural* Instruments for Providence to make use of for the Preservation and Propagation of the true Religion; for which Reason, Mr. *Selden*, and Mr. *Hildrop*, (in his Book *upon the Times of Antichrist*) observe, That so much is said of *the Isles of the Sea*, in the prophetic Writings. We are a Country, blessed by Providence above all other Nations, and distinguished by an invaluable and peculiar Produce, by means of which we are capable of doing, by *natural* Means,

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for the *Soil and Climate of Judæa*, or out of any *personal Partiality*, but for Reasons respecting the Knowledge and Worship of the *true God*, and always blessed, or punished them, whenever they answered, or frustrated those Ends; so, neither has

under God's *ordinary Providence*, what no other Nation is able to do without an *extraordinary Assistance*; I mean, of forcing the Balance of Power out of all other Hands. And, having no Interest to induce us to aim at *universal Monarchy*, we are more likely to propagate *Religion and Virtue*. The Balance of Power must be in the Hands of the *French*, or of *Us*. We know what Sort of Principles *they* propagate, in order to gain their Ends; and how the *Papists* have *corrupted Christianity*. If we hold the Balance, we have no political Designs upon our Neighbours which require *Infidelity and Irreligion* to carry them on. As, therefore, God Almighty, in his Government of *States and Kingdoms*, had always a Respect to the Reception of *Christianity*, and the Establishment of *Christ's Kingdom*, we have Reason to suppose, that in his publick Dispensations, he has *since* had, and ever will have, the same *relative View* to the future Preservation and further Propagation of it. And, as his Wisdom has distinguished *us* from all other Nations, by *sitting* us, in a peculiar Manner, for those Purposes, this *Apex*, as a Means naturally suited for such Ends, is a reasonable Ground upon which to build a *presumptive* Argument, that God intends to make that Use of us. Accordingly, Mr. Selden takes Notice, that "the Sceptre was no sooner departed from *Judah*, but the true Religion *flow* through all other Nations, and *fixed* itself here, as its Centre, or Place appointed by Divine Providence for its Continuance." And Mr. Hildrop, in the Book above-mentioned, is of Opinion, That, in the dreadful Distress of Nations, at the coming of *Antichrist*, this Country will be the happy *Asylum* for the *Elect*, and the grand Instrument of God in bringing about those blessed Times of *Peace and Perfection* which are to succeed that short, but exceeding hot Persecution. This is a most comfortable Consideration under our present Dangers, as it gives us Hopes of a Deliverance. A severe *Chastisement*, for our national Corruption, we must expect. This I am as certain of, as that *there is a God*, and that *his Word is true*; but, I piously believe, that it will be only a grievous Correction for great Wickedness; but not a total Destruction for an irreclaimable Obduracy; and, I hope, all good *Christians*, by their importunate Addresses to God, and zealous Endeavour to forward a *Reformation*, will help to appease the Divine Wrath, and mitigate the Rigour of his avenging Justice.

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he distinguished *this* Nation by his singular Protection, for any other Considerations than our having been a fit Instrument in the Hands of Providence to preserve his true Religion among us. If, therefore the Christian Religion, instead of being preserved and adorned, be openly denied and insulted, its Ordinances neglected, its Precepts violated; if, instead of soliciting the Divine Protection and Favour by frequent and fervent Prayer, we make a Mock of all publick and private Devotions; if the most daring Sins which always brought down national Judgments, grow prevalent among us; can we expect to be favoured with singular Blessings and Honours? Or can we expect to escape the common Fate of other wicked Nations? We can, at the best, only hope for some severe Correction, that may be the means of our Reformation. But, if we go on from one Degree of Wickedness to another, we shall grow ripe for Vengeance, and, instead of such an extraordinary Deliverance as we have often experienced, we shall be judicially delivered up as a publick Mark of God's Indignation. Heaven and Earth may pass away; every Created Being is capable of Alteration; but Self-existence is immutable. If a Wicked People will not be reclaimed by his Correcting Rod, his Vindictive one will Destroy us. By his singular Blessings and Deliverances we seem intended by Providence for his Chosen Nation; but his Hand is not shortened; he can raise up another Nation, tho' not naturally so fitted for it; make them the Preservers of his true Religion, and turn our Captivity, as he did that of the Jews, into a means of promoting it. Or, if we should be so impolitick as not only to weaken ourselves, but to throw our Strength into the Hands of those who are our immutable, and most formidable Enemies, there will be no Occasion for any other Judgment from Heaven, but only to leave us to fall a natural Sacrifice to our own

own Folly and Madness (d). Or, if upon *political Views*, those Vices should ever be *encouraged* which have a *natural Tendency* to destroy a Nation, can we possibly expect, that God should interpose and stop the common Course of Causes and Effects, only to hinder a foolish and wicked People from being over-run by a foreign Power, or from falling a Prey to domestick Disorders and Confusion? *Wickedness* will not only render us obnoxious to a *judicial Vistation*, but unavoidably destroy us of itself. *Voluptuousness* and *Luxury* in particular, (at this Time prevailing to an *extravagant Height*, even to a Degree of *Madness*) ever were, and ever *must* be, the Ruin of a People. *Unthinking*, or *designing Men*, may from thence argue, that there is a great Flow of *Wealth* among us; but those who have more Penetration, know that such intemperate Cravings after expensive Pleasures, are no more an Argument of *national Riches*, than a voracious Appetite at the Close of a

(d) I verily think, that History cannot produce such another Instance of Folly and Madness, as *we* are and have been for some time. We are blessed with Advantages, as to our *Situation* and *Products*, beyond any Nation in the World. We might be the richest and most potent People under the Sun, if we were wise enough to improve those Advantages. Yet, instead of the greatest Plenty, we can hardly raise Money for the Exigencies of Government, and the Support of our Poor. Instead of giving *Laws* to all the World, other Nations do not care to enter into any *Alliance* with us. We have a powerful Neighbour, whose grand Point in View has been, for Centuries past, and will be, as long as we subsist, to ruin us; and yet we have not only treated them as *Friends*, but enrich'd them with our *Products* and *Money*, suffering them to manufacture the former, and drain us of the latter, for the *Superfluities* of Life; nay, even in those Instances, where we might be very well supplied at *Home*. We have some Money still in the Nation, and we are so busy in scrambling for it, that the clearest Representations cannot open our Eyes to see our Danger. Is it possible for any thing to look more like a *judicial Blindness*, and *Infatuation*?

Consumption is a Symptom of Strength (e). For the Truth of these Observations, I appeal to the Nature of Things, and the History of the World. I may, without the least Degree of Rashness, challenge all Mankind to disprove them; and, in Consequence of them, I may as safely pronounce those to be the very worst Enemies to their Country, who encourage *Irreligion* and *Immorality*; and those to be its best Friends, who, by vindicating the Truth and Honour of *Religion*, by an holy and good Life, and by their ardent Addresses to God, endeavour to bring down his Blessing upon us, and encourage the Practice of those Virtues which are both acceptable to *Him*, and have a natural Tendency to promote our Happiness. This is the right Way of being faithful Subjects, and true *Patriots*.

And without this habitual Sense and Practice of *Religion*, there can be no such Thing as a steady and uniform *Integrity*. Take away *Religion*, and you leave no Motive that can regularly

(e) The many Places built for Entertainment about this City, and the Number of Persons who resort to them, the Equipages and Dress of the Company, all this would induce a Stranger to imagine, that the Nation is in a most flourishing Condition; and whoever converses (which Persons in *high* Life seldom have, or desire to have, the Opportunity of doing) with the trading Part of our People, and hears an almost universal Complaint of the Want of Business, and the Scarcity of Money, would wonder whence should arise such an Appearance of *Prosperity*. But, this is no *Mystery* to considering People. While Persons of *Fashion* can raise any Money at all, or get Credit for Dress and Equipage, they will enjoy their Pleasure without attending to distant Wants. As it is natural for *Inferiors* to have the same Appetite towards *sensual* Enjoyments, and an Inclination to imitate their Betters, and to be in their Company, *Tradepeople* will be as forward to strain their Purse and their Credit, for the sake of appearing among them, and sharing with them in their *Delicacies* of Life. But, what infinite ill Consequences must these Things produce! *Extravagance* will beget *Necessities*,

lady and constantly induce every Member of the Community to consult the Good of the *Whole*, and of one another. In *some* Cases it would be the *real* Interest of particular Persons to act in Opposition to the Interest of their Country, or a *Fellow Member* of it; and in all such Cases he would as *necessarily* pursue his own Happiness, as a Stone falls to the Ground by the Laws of *Gravitation*. And, if we consider how often, thro' want of Thought, or Judgment, or thro' the Impetuosity and Irregularity of their Passions, Men may make a wrong Estimate of their solid and lasting Interest, they would frequently be tempted to sacrifice a more considerable, if *remote*, Point to some *present* Advantage. Tho' there lies, perhaps, but a very small Space between them, yet the nearest Object strikes so strongly upon their Attention, that the more distant one is not seen at all, or not in its true Magnitude; by which means (as History informs us) Men of Sense may be led into Measures, that, in a little Time, would be destructive, not only to the Community, but to their own Families and themselves (f). Upon this Bottom of *Infidelity*, or *Irreligion*, *cessities*, and *Necessities* will beget indirect Means of supplying them in *private* Life, *Injustice* and *Fraud*; in *publick* Affairs, *Dependancy* and *Corruption*. So many agreeable Objects and such enchanting Sounds daily soliciting their Senses will inflame all the irregular Passions, create a perpetual Thirst after Pleasure, an Impatience of Confinement and Business, dissipate sober and serious Thought, which is as necessary to the *civil* Offices of Life, as it is to a true *religious* Frame of Mind; enervate the manly Genius of our Country, and every way disqualify the Members of it for a due Discharge of their several Employments in it. — And I esteem it none of the least of the many ill Consequences attending these grand and expensive Amusements, that they may mislead our Governors into a false and dangerous Mistake concerning our Condition.

(f) Though this may sometimes be the Case, yet, generally, they see the fatal Tendency of their Schemes, and go on in hopes that the *Publick* will be able to live out *their* Time, though in

ligion, can stand nothing but a *detached Scheme of personal Conveniency*; from whence can flow nothing but *mutual Distrust, Deceit, and universal Ruin*. But, if a Society firmly believes a *Providence*, and a *future State*, *HERE* is an *uniform Principle* that secures the Good of the *Whole*, by making it, in the final Issue of Things, the *real Interest* of every *Individual* to forego any Advantage, or suffer any Inconvenience, for the sake of promoting the *publick Good*, because he is sure, that all such Losses will be amply made up to him by his future Felicity, and the greatest *indirect Advantages* more than balanced by an *After-reckoning*. Besides that, these *religious Truths*, by regulating the disorderly Passions, will put his Mind into a Capacity of judging more truly of his Interest, upon the *Whole*, even with regard to *temporal Advantages*. Indeed, it often happens, that those who make great Pretences to *Religion*, are artful *Hypocrites*, and the more dexterous an *Hypocrite* is in acting his Part, the more Mischief he is capable

a weak and sickly Condition. Men, whose Minds are in a natural State of *Sensibility*, can hardly conceive the Possibility of losing all Humanity towards their Fellow Subjects, Kindness for their Friends, and Affection for their Children and Relations; how they can be unmoved at the Thoughts of intailing Misery upon so many Millions, upon Ages yet unborn, only for the sake of acquiring Things of no Significance towards *rational Happiness*; *Honours*, that are quite foreign to our Nature; *Affluence*, that is always superfluous, often injurious, sometimes fatal; *Grandeur*, that is not only empty, but burdensome to a truly wise Man, whose Happiness consists principally in having the Command of his own Time, and knowing how to employ it to the Improvement of his Mind; in acquiring the Government of himself, and not in having others subject to his Will. But, those who have seen and observ'd the Conduct of Mankind, must be convinced, that human Nature, *long hackney'd* (as *Shakespear* says) *in the Ways of Men*, grows blind to its own true Felicity, and dead to all Tenderness towards others. If any such should chance to look into these Papers, I only desire them to consider, that their *selfish Scheme*, calculated, as it is, for a very short Time, will, yet, most probably operate too quick for their *own Safety*.

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capable of doing by imposing upon the World, A Man is the better fitted for a Minister of *Darkness*, by his being able to appear in the Form of an *Angel of Light*. But, tho' we may be mistaken in Men, if they wear a *Mask*, it is *unpardonable* Folly to be mistaken in those who pull it off. If a Man *avows*, or shews by his *Behaviour*, that he has not a sincere, affecting Sense of *Religion*, whatever his *present* Intention may be, as to *some* Points, it is impossible to have any well-grounded Security for his *constant* and *future* Behaviour, because he has no *invariable* Principle of Action. *Virtue* and *Honour* are, with some People, very favourite Words, but, separate from *Religion*, they are but *mere Words*, *empty Sounds*, of no Signification towards restraining the Passions; nothing but *Religion* can do that; neither can a true Sense of *Religion* be preserved without *religious Worship*, which is now looked upon as a Thing below the Regard of a Person of *Fashion*.

I could with great Pleasure enlarge upon this seasonable Topic, and the Necessity of inculcating it; but I dare not presume to detain you any longer. May GOD ALMIGHTY'S Grace give a Blessing and Efficacy to what I have delivered!

To Him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, &c.

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To the Hon. Sec. of the Navy, &c.

